

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the remarks that follow.

At the outset, applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 2 and 5-9 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, applicant has submitted herewith new claims 20 and 21. Claim 20 represents a combination of original claims 1 and 9, and claim 21 represents a combination of original claim 1 and dependent claims 4 and 5. Accordingly, claims 20 and 21 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Applicants have also rewritten claims 7 and 8 in independent form, thereby placing that claims in condition for allowance as well.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Ungerecht in view of Hamm.

By this Amendment, applicants have amended claim 1 to require that the single radially oriented strut extend between the seat and an annular support ring supported in the tubular housing adjacent the fluid inlet, with the strut projecting below the annular support ring.

As the Examiner will appreciate, there is no such annular support ring in Hamm nor does the single strut (in the Figure 1 embodiment) extend below any such annular support ring. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as well as claims 3-6 and 9 that depend therefrom are now patentable over the applied prior art.

Previously non-elected claims 10-19 have been canceled.


With the above changes, it is respectfully submitted that all of the remaining application claims 1-9, 20 and 21 are in condition for allowance and early passage to issue is requested. In

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the event, any small matters remain outstanding, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned so that the prosecution of this application can be expeditiously concluded.

Respectfully submitted,

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